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Bobby Baker Link With Juan Bosch Indicated By CIA

By David Kraslow
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WASHINGTON—The Central Intelligence Agency reported last March that former Senate majority secretary Bobby Baker may have been working with financial backers of Juan Bosch, former president of the Dominican Republic.

This was learned Thursday from secret testimony taken by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last July during its investigation of U.S. intervention in the Dominican rebellion.

Testimony of CIA Director William F. Raborn, Undersecretary of State Thomas C. Mann and other administration officials still is classified as secret.

The testimony covered a wide range of U.S. military, diplomatic, intelligence and economic involvement in the Dominican Republic before and after a coup was launched on

April 24 against the regime of Donald Reid Cabral.

Baker's name was brought into the hearings by Sen. Bourke B. Hickenlooper (R-Iowa), who asked Mann if he had any knowledge that Baker was "working in collaboration" with Diego Bordas and Jose Benitez, friends of Baker who reportedly were helping to finance Bosch.

"This information, I think," Mann said, "is included in a CIA report dated the 18th of March, 1965 . . . I have no knowledge except what is contained in this report."

Bosch, deposed in a bloodless coup in 1963, was in exile in Puerto Rico at the time of

the CIA report. The coup against Reid Cabral was launched in Bosch's name. Bosch has since returned to the Dominican Republic and is expected to seek the presidency when elections are scheduled.

It is clear from the testimony that the Johnson administration opposed the rebels fighting under the Bosch banner and the return of Bosch to power because of fear that a rebel victory could result in "another Cuba."

Mann testified that Bosch was not a Communist. But he said the United States had learned Bosch had secretly made a "political alliance of

convenience" with three Dominican Communist parties—one oriented to Havana, another to Moscow and a third to Peking.

Hickenlooper asked Mann about a report that Bosch, prior to the coup, had been "getting excellent financial support from different quarters in order to consolidate the PRD (the leftist but non-Communist Dominican Revolutionary Party) in his leadership."

Among the contributions, Hickenlooper said, were \$10,000 on March 12 and \$50,000 later from Bordas, a Dominican promoter-businessman.

"Jose Benitez, a Puerto Rican millionaire," Hickenlooper said, "is one of the other contributors, and Bobby Gene Baker, former secretary of the U.S. Senate majority, a good friend of Bordas and Benitez who share business interests. Do you know anything about that allegation and those contributions?"

"We know there is a CIA report to this effect," Mann said.

A Jose Benitez of Puerto Rico testified during the Senate Rules Committee's investigation of Baker's financial dealings.

Baker resigned under fire as secretary to Senate Democrats in October, 1963, just before the rules committee inquiry began. Benitez, a political operator in Puerto Rico, resigned his Interior Department post during the investigation. He had been commissioner of the U.S. trust territory in the Pacific.

The inquiry disclosed that Benitez and Baker were partners in a deal to import meat from Haiti to Puerto Rico and the United States.